

Russian Empire Gazetteers

Russian Empire Jurisdictions

The Russian Empire was divided up into states/provinces called guberni (singular – gubernia). Each gubernia was further sub-divided into counties/districts called uyezdi (singular – uyezd).

Jurisdiction	Western Russia	Eastern Russia
State/Province	Gubernia (губерния)	Oblast (область)
County/District	Uyezd (уезд)	Okrug (округ)
Commune	Volost (волость)	

Town Vocabulary

Russian	English
деревня (дер.)	village
село	village with a church
приход	parish
поселения	village/settlement
поселок	village/settlement
местечко	small village or town (often used with a shtetl or Jewish community)
место	place
город (г.)	city
фольварк	manor farm
колония	colony
сообщество	community (often used when referring to a shtetl or Jewish community)

Spiski Naselennykh Mest Rossiiskoi Imperii

- Foundational gazetteer for the Russian Empire (the Kingdom of Poland (Russian Poland) is not included in the Spiski).
- Multi-volume – each volume is for a different gubernia. Most volumes have a locality index at the back of the book.
- In order to use this gazetteer, you need to know which gubernia your ancestor's town was located in.
- Russian language gazetteer
- Many copies available online, linked via the FamilySearch Wiki.

Find links to various online versions of the Spiski at:

familysearch.org/en/wiki/Russian_Empire_Gazetteers

For column headings and other information on how to use the Spiski, see familysearch.org/en/wiki/img_auth.php/fc/1.2-Spiski_Gazetteer-Instruction.pdf

Russisches Geographisches Namenbuch (RGN)

- Best comprehensive gazetteer of all localities in the Russian Empire (eleven volumes).
- Localities are listed in the Cyrillic alphabet with the exception of Congress Poland which uses the Latin alphabet.
- Not available online. Is available at the Family History Library, International Reference 947 E5r v. 1-11.
- References the Spiski gazetteer and other gazetteers.

For instructions on how to use the RGN, see: familysearch.org/en/wiki/img_auth.php/f2/1.2-RGN_Gazetteer-Instruction.pdf

Familio

- Russian genealogy website.
- Place name database includes locations in: Belarus, Estonia, Kazakhstan, Latvia, Ukraine, and Russia.
- Must be searched using the Russian spelling of a town name. This can be located through Google Maps or Wikipedia articles about the town.
- Russian language website but can be translated via Google Translate.

For instructions on how to search this database, see: familysearch.org/en/wiki/Ukraine_Gazetteers#Familio

JewishGen Communities Database

- Contains data on approximately 6,000 Jewish communities.
- Contains information about places primarily within the Pale of Settlement for the Russian Empire.
- Can help you locate the town, regardless of whether or not your ancestors were Jewish.

For instructions on how to use JewishGen Communities Database, see: familysearch.org/en/wiki/img_auth.php/e/e7/1_-_Instruction_-_JewishGen_Communities_JMR.pdf

Country Specific Gazetteers

The gazetteers above focus on the Russian Empire as a whole, but there are also country specific gazetteers available for you to use in your research. To locate these resources and learn how to see them, see the following Wiki pages:

- Belarus: familysearch.org/en/wiki/Belarus_Gazetteers
- Estonia: familysearch.org/en/wiki/Estonia_Gazetteers
- Latvia: familysearch.org/en/wiki/Latvia_Gazetteers
- Lithuania: familysearch.org/en/wiki/Lithuania_Gazetteers
- Moldova: familysearch.org/en/wiki/Moldova_Gazetteers
- Ukraine: familysearch.org/en/wiki/Ukraine_Gazetteers

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